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UNHCR ACTIVITIES FINANCED BY VOLUNTARY FUNDS: REPORT FOR 1993-1994 AND PROPOSED PROGRAMMES AND BUDGET FOR 1995

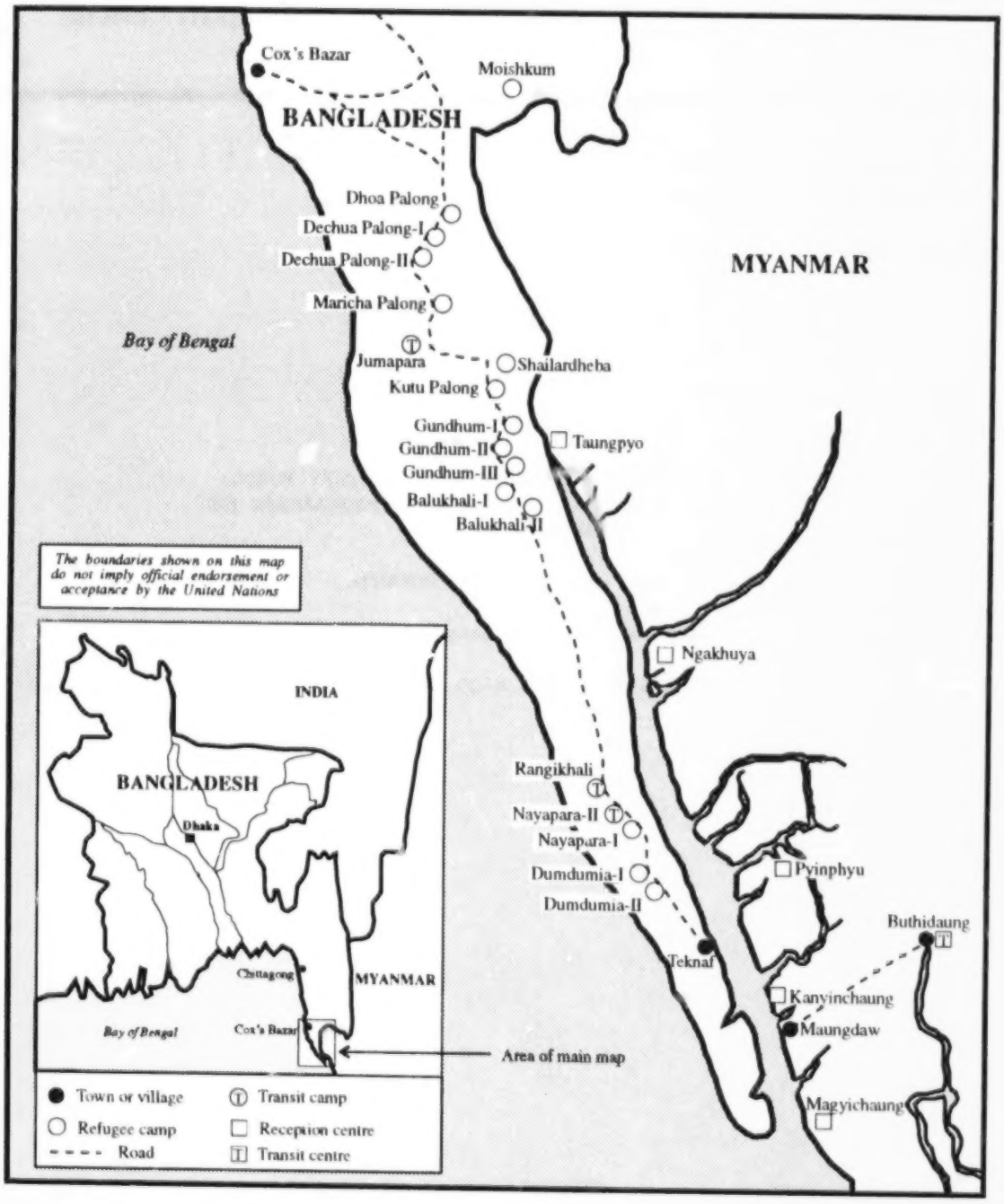
PART II. ASIA AND OCEANIA

Section 2 - Bangladesh

(submitted by the High Commissioner)

GE.94- 03233

BANGLADESH


Cox's Bazar
Moishkum
BANGLADESH
Dhoa Palong
Dechua Palong-I
Dechua Palong-II
MYANMAR
Maricha Palong
Bay of Bengal
Jumapara
Shailardheba
Kutu Palong
Gundhum-I
Gundhum-II
Gundhum-III
Taungpyo
Balukhali-I
Balukhali-II
The boundaries shown on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations
Ngakhuya
INDIA
BANGLADESH
Dhaka
Rangikhali
Nayapara-II
Nayapara-I
Dumdumia-I
Dumdumia-II
Pyinphyu
Buthidaung
Teknaf
Chittagong
MYANMAR
Kanyinchaung
Bay of Bengal
Cox's Bazar
Maungdaw
Area of main map
Magyichaung
Town or village
Transit camp
Refugee camp
Reception centre
Road
Transit centre

II.2 BANGLADESH

Country Overview

Characteristics of the refugee population

1. At the end of 1993, 198,786 refugees from Rakhine State, Myanmar, were accommodated in 18 camps in Cox's Bazar and Bandarban districts. The majority of the refugees were rural labourers. In addition, 167 urban refugees, mostly from Somalia and Myanmar, were assisted in Dhaka.

Country of Origin	Number 1/1/93	Number 1/1/94	Percent Total of which M/F/C*	Location	Type of assistance
Refugees from Myanmar in camps	244,806	198,786	49/51/56	Cox's Bazar and Bandarban districts	Care & Maintenance Repatriation
Somalia	155	122	70/30/24	Predominantly in Dhaka	Care & Maintenance
Iraq	3	2	100/-/-	Dhaka	Care & Maintenance
Islamic Republic of Iran	3	2	57/43/57	Dhaka	Care & Maintenance
Other refugees from Myanmar	7	37	76/24/22	Dhaka	Care & Maintenance
Sri Lanka	4	4	50/50/0	Dhaka	Care & Maintenance
Sudan	1	-	-/-/-	Dhaka	-

* Under 18 years of age

Major developments (1993 and first quarter 1994)

2. The signature of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Government of Bangladesh and UNHCR in May 1993 established the basis for UNHCR's participation in the voluntary repatriation to Myanmar which is further elaborated upon in the Overview of Developments in the Region and Regional Special Programmes (A/AC.96/825/Part II/1) It also defined UNHCR's assistance role towards refugees in the camps, provided for increased access by UNHCR to the camps and in refugee-impacted areas, and highlighted the responsibilities of the various parties according protection to refugees.

3. An assistance package comprising over a hundred small-scale projects was designed for refugee-impacted areas, and some $ 3 million committed for their implementation. A document for a multi-year forestry replantation and rehabilitation project was finalised and submitted to donors.

Programme objectives and priorities

4. Priority is given to the voluntary repatriation of refugees from Myanmar which is expected to continue in 1994 and 1995; attention will also focus on sustaining the level of care provided to the population remaining in the camps, and to maintaining previously established services. Similarly, the care and maintenance of the urban caseload will continue until their voluntary repatriation or resettlement can be organized. The implementation of projects to assist the local population affected by the refugee presence and to protect the environment will receive special attention.

Arrangements for implementation/related inputs

5. The Ministry of Relief is the focal point for assistance to refugees and has appointed a Commissioner to coordinate the efforts of the technical ministries concerned. The Government is assisted by Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) of France and Holland, Save the Children Fund (UK), World Concern, Gonoshasthaya Kendra (GK), OXFAM, Concern Bangladesh, and Terre des Hommes in the sectors of health, sanitation and water supply in the camps. At the request of the Government and UNHCR, the World Food Programme (WPF) provides the major components of the food basket which in turn is distributed by the Bangladesh Red Crescent Society in collaboration with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. The implementing partner for assistance to the urban caseload is the Dhaka Asania Mission, and responsibility for implementing projects in refugee affected areas rests with an inter-departmental committee headed by the Ministry of Relief.

General Programmes

(a) **Variations in planned activities in 1993**

6. Prior to the signing of the MOU with the Government, the absence of a clear legal framework defining the respective roles of the parties concerned and UNHCR access to refugee camps slowed down the pace of implementation of programmes, in particular in relation to shelter, as a result of which some 11,000 persons remained inadequately housed. The problem was aggravated by severe storms early in

the year. Whilst there were no serious problems in the sectors of health and nutrition, the health status in the transit centres gave cause for concern since non-governmental organizations (NGOs) were not allowed access there until the end of 1993. The introduction of blended food as part of the general food basket, although delayed by several months, had a positive impact on this situation. The plan to produce blended food locally ran into logistical problems, however, and production did not begin during this period.

7. A programme to provide compressed rice husks as fuel to the refugees was introduced in an effort to prevent further denuding of forest land in the vicinity of the camps. Two refugee camps were shut down as the population decreased towards the end of the year because of the repatriation, and an expensive water trucking operation was terminated when a new water source was identified. The Office faced major delays in the delivery of relief goods due to difficulties in clearing goods through customs. Finally, with regard to the urban caseload, only three refugees were resettled, while the rest received subsistence allowance as planned.

(b) **1994 planned implementation**

Emergency Fund

8. $ 25,000 were allocated to assist the Government of Bangladesh in its relief efforts following the cyclone of 2 May 1994.

Care and maintenance

9. Programme emphasis will continue to be on maintaining a satisfactory standard of health, nutrition, sanitation and drinking water in the camps. The reconstruction of shelters has assumed added importance after the devastating cyclone that hit the camps on 2 May 1994 with winds up to 250 km per hour which flattened 80 to 90 per cent of refugee shelters and administrative structures in many camps. The Sub-Office, prepared for such an emergency, was able to implement its contingency plans speedily. Plans have now been made for the reconstruction of the damaged facilities in all 18 camps. The subsistence allowance to urban refugees continues along with basic medical coverage, counselling, skills training and primary education.

(c) **1995 programme proposals**

10. With priority being given to the voluntary repatriation of refugees from Myanmar, the Office foresees a much reduced allocation in the sectors of water supply, sanitation, health, shelter and the supply of non-food items, as refugees leave for home and camps are progressively shut down. Simultaneously, subsistence allowances and related assistance are planned for an urban caseload of 170 refugees at the same level as in the previous year.

11. The sectoral breakdown for the initial and revised 1994 and the initial 1995 care and maintenance allocations is as follows (in US dollars):

Sector	Initial 1994	Revised 1994	Initial 1995
Food	177,980	510,792	198,249
Transport/logistics	367,226	214,532	169,722
Domestic needs	3,357,697	2,776,387	1,434,940
Water	367,620	240,167	166,907
Sanitation	1,534,390	1,332,941	747,688
Health/nutrition	2,703,985	2,852,419	1,916,866
Shelter	2,871,410	2,241,217	1,230,101
Community services	146,115	23,228	20,759
Education	204,862	6,532	62,095
Legal assistance	101,485	86,583	63,797
Agency op. support	1,811,530	1,574,502	1,240,476
Project personnel	2,549,700	0	0
Programme Delivery	0	2,467,000	1,433,000
Total	$ 16,194,000	$ 14,326,300	$ 8,684,600

Special Programmes

Education Account

12. Nine university students were attending medical and dental classes in the 1992/1993 academic year; the scholarship grant to two of them was terminated on the basis of poor performance. In the current academic year, there is provision for seven scholarships, to be granted in 1995.

Other Trust Funds

13. As a result of UNHCR's negotiations with the Governments of Bangladesh and Myanmar, an agreed framework was established for the voluntary repatriation of Muslim residents of Rakhine State in Myanmar who had sought refuge in camps in Cox's Bazar in 1991-1992. Two tripartite MOUs established the legal framework, one signed in Dhaka on 12 May 1993, and one in Yangon on 5 November 1993. A joint appeal was launched with WFP in December 1993 for funds to cover the logistics of return, a repatriation kit, and small-scale community-based development projects to assist returnees in their reintegration. Initial individual repatriation movements were monitored by UNHCR, and constitute already 20 per cent of the total refugee population. Larger scale organised return movements have started. A UNHCR Liaison Office was established in Yangon which includes a field presence in Rakhine State to monitor the return of refugees in safety and dignity.

14. The most important aspect of the repatriation is the community-based reintegration programme. Its main objective is to improve the economic and social life of the population in Rakhine State while at the same time fostering better relations between the authorities and the residents with the aim of providing an anchor preventing future outflows. Its focus will be on five priority areas: water and sanitation, health, agriculture and fisheries, education and other income generating activities. More details on the returnee programme are provided under the Overview of Developments in the Region and Regional Special Programmes (A/AC.96/825/Part II/1).

15. A special programme of assistance to affected local communities in Bangladesh was approved in May 1993, and the Government appointed a Project Coordinator to elaborate on the proposals prepared earlier by a consultant, and to oversee their implementation. Of 109 projects proposed by the consultant, 80 have been selected, of which 20 have been completed and a further 30 are near completion. Despite a slow start, these projects, aimed at improving health and educational facilities and at promoting public works, have fostered goodwill among the beneficiaries, and have already noticeably reduced tensions between the refugees and the local population. Taking into account the present rate of implementation, all projects should be completed in the course of 1995. A contribution in kind of wheat soya blend was received from the EEC in 1993.

Programme Delivery and Administrative Support Costs

(a) Variations in planned activities in 1993

16. Expenditures in Bangladesh increased significantly in the second half of 1993 given the expansion of UNHCR's presence and range of activities in the camps, the establishment of camp offices, and UNHCR's involvement in facilitating the voluntary repatriation of refugees to Myanmar. In August 1993, a staffing review exercise was conducted. Subsequently, four additional local General Service posts for Branch Office Dhaka were approved with effect from December 1993, and five local General Service posts for Sub-Office Cox's Bazar from January 1994. The UNHCR operation in Bangladesh has significantly changed as a result of the involvement in the large-scale repatriation operation. Thus, plans were drawn up for staffing and other administrative needs of Sub-Office Cox's Bazar in support of the repatriation operation. Total needs in 1993 were therefore revised upwards under all budget chapters. With the appointment of new staff, including the rotation of staff, expenditures under common staff costs were higher than expected.

(b) 1994 planned implementation

17. The revised estimates are higher than the 1994 initial budget. This is mainly due to an increase in the number of staff, as a result of the creation of posts in 1993 and short-term staff who will be employed under temporary assistance. In addition, a further seven local General Service posts were pproved, effective 1 June 1994. Of these, one post of Finance Clerk has been created to strengthen the Dhaka Office. Posts created under the repatriation programme covered that of a Logistics and an EDP Assistant, two Secretaries and two Interpreters in the Sub-Office in Cox's Bazar. In the context of the continuing care and maintenance programme, one international food and nutrition specialist was employed on a temporary basis to provide necessary support on food issues, both to the Bangladesh and the Nepal programmes. In order better to meet the needs in south Asia and a number of other countries in the region in developing consistent policies and approaches on food assistance, a post for a Regional Food and Nutrition Coordinator, to be based in Dhaka, has been created, effective 1 July 1994.

18. Other increases, corresponding to the greater volume of programme activities, result from the relocation of Branch Office Dhaka to new office premises, thus increasing costs under general operating expenses. The requirements under the budget chapter for acquisition of furniture and equipment have also increased to

cover purchases of computers, printers and telecommunications equipment for the repatriation programme.

(c) **1995 programme proposals**

19. With the creation of posts in 1994 and the anticipated consolidation and closure of camps occurring in late 1994 and in 1995, the requirement for temporary assistance will decrease in 1995. Staff costs are also estimated to be lower, as nine posts, including two Field Officer posts, are foreseen for discontinuation at 30 June 1994. Estimates for non-staff costs, particularly local travel, are maintained at similar levels as in 1994, while general operating expenses, mainly covering office premises and communication costs are lower than in 1994, being the second full year of repatriation programme activities.

20. The possibility of discontinuing at an earlier date in 1995 some of the local General Service posts, currently scheduled for discontinuation at the end of 1995, will be reviewed within the coming months, once the pace of repatriation and the pattern of closure and consolidation of camps becomes clearer.

UNHCR EXPENDITURE IN BANGLADESH

(in thousands of United States dollars)

1993	1994		1995	
AMOUNT OBLIGATED	ALLOCATION APPROVED BY 1993 EXCOM	PROPOSED REVISED ALLOCATION	SOURCE OF FUNDS AND TYPE OF ASSISTANCE	PROPOSED ALLOCATION/ PROJECTION
GENERAL PROGRAMMES (1)				
–	–	25.0	EMERGENCY FUND	–
14,934.9	16,194.0	11,859.3	CARE AND MAINTENANCE	7,251.6
801.0 a/	712.4	–	VOLUNTARY REPATRIATION	–
11.5 b/	–	–	LOCAL SETTLEMENT	–
12.4 b/	–	–	RESETTLEMENT	–
–	–	2,467.0	PROGRAMME DELIVERY See Annexes I a and II a	1,433.0
15,759.8	**16,906.4**	**14,351.3**	**SUB–TOTAL OPERATIONS**	**8,684.6**
–	–	372.0	ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT See Annexes I b and II b	261.6
15,759.8	**16,906.4**	**14,723.3**	**TOTAL (1)**	**8,946.2**
SPECIAL PROGRAMMES (2)				
25.8	25.6	25.6	EDUCATION ACCOUNT 10 university scholarships	25.6
2,824.6	–	5,719.6	OTHER TRUST FUNDS Assistance to Myanmar refugees	3,917.3
–	–	526.0	PROGRAMME DELIVERY See Annexes I a and II a	1,301.6
–	–	5.2	ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT See Annexes I b and II b	88.2
103.4	38.6	40.0	Junior Professional Officer	40.0
2,953.8	**64.2**	**6,316.4**	**TOTAL (2)**	**5,372.7**
18,713.6	**16,970.6**	**21,039.7**	**GRAND TOTAL (1+2)**	**14,318.9**

a/ of which US$ 800,000 incurred against the General Allocation for Voluntary Repatriation and US$ 980 against the Overall Allocation

b/ obligation incurred against Overall Allocation